

XXIX. *An Attempt to interpret the Legend and Inscription of a very curious Phœnician Medal, never hitherto explained. In a Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Morton, President of the Royal Society, from the Rev. John Swinton, B. D. F. R. S. Member of the Academy degli Apatisti at Florence, and of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona in Tuscany.*

My Lord,

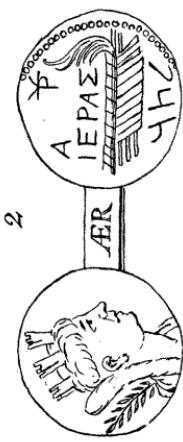
Read May 21, 1767. C A P T. Swinton some time since put into my hands a very curious silver coin, taken, as he informed me, out of your Lordship's valuable cabinet. He at the same time also imparted to me your Lordship's commands, relative to that coin. In obedience to which, I now do myself the honour to send you the following interpretation of the legend and inscription it exhibits. This, as I cannot help believing it true, or at least not very remote from truth, may possibly, I would flatter myself, prove not altogether unsatisfactory or unacceptable to your Lordship.

I.

On one side (see T A B. XII.) the medal presents to our view Jupiter sitting in a chair, with his eagle before him, a bunch of grapes in his right hand, and a sort of lance, or rather staff, as it should seem, in his left. Behind him the legend בָּאֵל תָּרָז, BAAL TARZ, or BAAL TARS, formed of Phœnician letters, may be discerned;

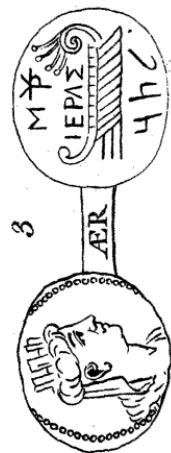


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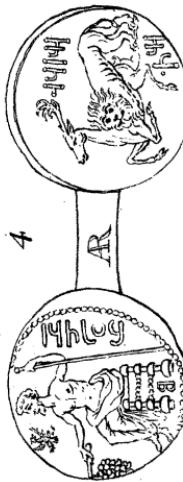


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Apud Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.



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Apud Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

E Theatru Illustrissimi Comitis de  
Morton, R.S.S.

and the element B, inverted, is visible under the chair. On the other side we discover a lion seizing upon, or rather tearing, a stag; over and under which the two Phœnician words מִזְרָג מָתָה, MIZZERAG MOTH, or MUTS, in their proper characters, unless I am greatly mistaken, seem clearly to appear. The workmanship of all the figures, but particularly of the lion and the stag, is finished in a high manner, and exquisitely fine.

Several (1) similar medals have been published by Lord Pembroke, M. Morell, and M. Pellerin. Amongst these we find four in Lord Pembroke's noble cabinet, emitted from the same mint, and done in the same taste, with that I am here considering, three of (2) which exhibit a lion tearing a bull. Not one of the legends, or inscriptions, with which they are adorned, has been hitherto explained. A proper and accurate draught of the medal before me has never yet, as I apprehend, been given us, by any antiquary, or author whatsoever, and therefore the piece itself may pass for an inedited coin.

## II.

That the legend of this medal is formed of the letters *Beth*, *Ain*, *Lamed*, *Thau*, *Resch*, and *Zain*, from which result the words BAAL TARZ, or BAAL TARS, will, I flatter myself, not be denied by the learned. The first character strongly resembles the

(1) *Numism. Antiqu.* à Thom. Pembr. et Mont. Gomer. Com. Collect. P. 2. T. 87. Morel. *Specim. Univers. Rei Num. mar. Antiqu.* &c. P. 245. Tab. xxvi. Lipsiæ, 1695. Peller. *Recueil de Medailles de Peuples et de Villes*, &c. Tom. Trois. Pl. CXXII. A Paris, 1763.

(2) *Numism. Antiqu.* à Thom. Pembr. et Mont. Gomer. Com. Collect. ubi sup.

*Beth* of the (3) Palmyrenes, which had most certainly the same origin with the Phœnician *Beth*. Nor can it be taken here for any other element. Besides, the common Phœnician form of that letter and the character in question are (4) promiscuously used on this species of coins. The second element is *Ain*, as appears from other (5) authentic monuments. The third is *Lamed*, though not so well preserved here as on some other similar (6) coins. The fourth, at first sight, will be pronounced *Thau*, by every one at all versed in this branch of literature. That the fifth is *Resch*, we may fairly presume; as the similar letter *Daleth* appears (7) open at the top, like this, on a medal of Sidon, published by M. Pellerin, and as such a figure of *Resch* actually presents itself to our view on the reverses of two of my Tyrian (8) coins. Nor does the correspondent character on another of these Phœnician medals, a draught of which has been given (9) us by M. Morell, recede much from the common Phœnician form of *Resch*, which on these pieces likewise sometimes occurs. The sixth is *Zain*, as has been (10) rendered elsewhere sufficiently evident. What the inverted B, under the chair, was intended to denote, unless we may consider it as the initial letter

(3) *Philos. Transact.* Vol. XLVIII. p. 693, 740.

(4) Peller. ubi sup. Pl. CXXII. p. 164.

(5) *Philos. Transf.* Vol. LIII. p. 282. & Vol. LIV. Tab. xxiv. Peller. *Recueil de Medail. de Peup. et de Vil. &c.* Tom. Trois. p. 164. Pl. CXXII. A Paris, 1763.

(6) Id. *ibid.*

(7) Peller. ubi sup. Tom. Sec. Pl. LXXXII. N. 21. p. 226.

(8) See Tab. XII. N. 2, 3.

(9) Morel. ubi sup. Peller. Tom. Trois. Pl. CXXII.

(10) *Philos. Transf.* Vol. XLVIII. p. 715. & Vol. LIII. p. 283.

of the first word BAAL, it may perhaps be not so easy to decide.

From the two Phœnician proper names BAAL TARZ, or BAAL TARS, it seems highly probable, that the medal was struck at Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, seated in a country abounding with wild beasts, (11) particularly lions and stags, and famous for the birth of the great apostle St. Paul. For BAAL TARZ, or BAAL TARS, 'is equivalent to JUPITER TARSENSIS, JUPITER OF TARSUS, or THE LORD OF TARSUS. So we find this Pagan divinity denominated (12) on coins ΖΕΥΣ ΚΑΙCΙΟC, JUPITER CASIUS, ΖΕΥΣ ΚΑΠΙΤΩΛΙΕΥC ANTI-ΟΧΕΩN, JUPITER CAPITOLINUS ANTIOCHEN-SIUM, ΖΕΥΣ ΚΤΡΑΤΗΓΟC ΑΜΑΣΤΡΙΑΝΩN, JUPI-TER IMPERATOR AMASTRIANORUM, &c. And, upon (13) a coin of the emperor Hadrian, we read ΔΙΟC ΤΑΡΣΕΩN ΜΕΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩC, JOVIS TAR-SENSIUM METROPOLEOS, or JOVIS TARSENSIS, OF JUPITER OF TARSUS, the very appellation given this pretended deity by the medal now in view. Nay, he is there exhibited with his eagle, and sitting in a chair, as he appears upon the Phœnician coin I am endea-vouring to explain. The notion here advanced is also strongly supported by two pieces of the emperor Gordian, published by Dr. Vaillant. One of these on the reverse presents to our view Bacchus, with a

(11) *Ælian. de Animal.* Lib. V. c. Ivi. Boch. Chan. Lib. I. c. v. p. 376, 377. *Francof. ad Moen.* 1681.

(12) *Joan. Vaill. Numism. Imp. August. & Caesar. à Pop. Rom. Dit. Græcè loquent. &c. pass.* In like manner the great deity of Berytus went under the appellation of BAAL BERITH, according to Bochart. *Boch. ubi sup. p. 859.*

(13) *Joan. Vaill. ubi sup. p. 36.* *Amstelædami, 1700.*

bunch of grapes (14) in his right hand, as Jupiter appears on the medal before me, attended by the inscription ΤΑΡΠΟΥ ΜΕΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ, &c. ΤΑΡΣΙ ΜΕΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΟΣ, &c. and the other is adorned with the same inscription, and a lion tearing a (15) bull, the very symbol that occurs on three of Lord Pembroke's (16) coins, so perfectly similar to that which is the object of my attention here.

In farther eviction of the point I am contending for, I must beg leave to remark, that two pieces of Tarsus with Jupiter Tarfensis on the reverse, in the very same attitude, and, in other respects, resembling the figure of the same deity on the medal now considered, have been lately (17) published by M. Pellerin.

From the coin of Gordian (18) adorned with Bacchus on the reverse, holding a bunch of grapes in his right hand, we may infer, not only that Bacchus was worshiped at Tarsus, but likewise that wine was made in the district appertaining to that city. This will easily and naturally account for the grapes held by Jupiter, or Baal, in his right hand, on the piece I am attempting to illustrate here.

It must be farther remarked, that such medals as this, as well as many others, are dug up in the neighbourhood (19) of Kepfe, the Seleucia Pieria of the antients, which stood at no very great distance from

(14) Joan. Vaill. ubi sup. p. 157.

(15) Id. Ibid.

(16) *Numism. Antiqu. &c.* à Thom. Pembr. et Mont. Gomer. Com. *Collect.* p. 2. T. 87.

(17) Peller. ubi sup. Tom. Sec. Pl. LXXIV. p. 175—177. A Paris, 1763.

(18) Joan. Vaill. ubi sup. p. 157.

(19) Pococke's *Descript. of the East*, Vol. II. p. 186.

mount Amanus and the borders of Cilicia. This, in conjunction with what has been already offered in support of my present opinion, will amount to the strongest presumption, if not an irrefragable proof, that the piece in question was struck at Tarfus. The late Mr. Arthur Pullinger shewed me two similar coins, found near the place just mentioned, which he purchased at Aleppo, and brought with him to England out of the East.

That the Phœnician name TARZ should have answered to the Greek ΤΑΡΣΟΣ, and the Latin TARSUS, can be no matter of surprize to any person at all versed in oriental literature. For 'tis too well known to stand in need of a proof, that ΟΣ is a pure Greek termination, and vs a Latin one, superadded to the Phœnician word. And that the Greeks (20) not infrequently converted *Zain* into *Sigma*, as the Latins did into *S*, is a most obvious truth. Many instances of such conversions, in oriental names adopted by those nations, might, with the utmost facility, be produced.

### III.

With regard to the characters on the reverse, their powers seem sufficiently deducible from other monuments heretofore explained. The first and fifth will undoubtedly be taken for *Mem*. The second points plainly at *Zain*. The third will be looked upon either as *Daleth*, *Caph*, or *Resch*; though, if the sense be duly attended to, I think we must pro-

(20) Boch. Chan. Lib. I. c. xxvii p. 559. c. vi. p. 390. & alib. Francof. ad Moen. 1681. The Arabs, after the conquest of Syria, adopted the Greek, or Latin, name; which is evidently not so antient as the Phœnician תַּרְזָ, TARZ, or TARS.

nounce it *Resch*. The fourth will be allowed to represent *Ghimmel*, as that element appears in some of the (21) Palmyrene inscriptions, and particularly that found (22) at Teive. The sixth, as I apprehend, must pass for *Thau*. Now the words formed of these letters, מִזְרָג מֵת, MIZZERAG MOTH, or MISSEERAG MVTH, may be rendered AB IMPLECTENDO (COLLIGANDO, CONNECTENDO, &c.) MORS, or rather A CONNECTIONE (COLLIGATIONE, IMPLEXV, CONGRESSV, &c.) MORS, FROM THE CONNECTION (SEIZURE, ATTACK, &c.) comes DEATH. In Hebrew the second letter of the first word here is *Sin*, in Chaldee *Samech*, and in Arabic *Ze*. That in all these languages, however, the term is nearly the same, and has nearly the same signification annexed to it, we learn (23) from some of the best lexicographers.

Nor can any thing be more consonant to the nature of the symbol on the reverse than the sense here assigned the inscription. They may both perhaps be supposed to have alluded to the Indian manner of hunting stags with lions, mentioned by *Ælian* (24), which might formerly likewise have prevailed in Cilicia; or to the production of those (25) animals, which were anciently so numerous in that country; or lastly to some remarkable event, that not impro-

(21) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. XLVIII. p. 693, 740.

(22) See Vol. LVI. Tab. I. Fig. 1. p. 5.

(23) Val. Schind. Johan. Buxtorf. F. *Lex. Chald. Talm.* & *Rabbini. Leonh. Reckenb.* & Jo. Christ. Clod. *Lex. Hebr. Select.* Lipsiae, 1744.

(24) *Ælian. de Animal. Lib. XVII. c. xxvi. p. 990.* Colonise Allobrogum, 1616.

(25) *Ælian. de Animal. Lib. V. c. lvi. Boch. Chan. Lib. I. c. v. p. 376, 377. Francofurti ad Moenum, 1681.*

bably happened about the time the medal was struck.

## IV.

The last remark naturally leads me to the age of the coin I am endeavouring to explain, to which perhaps a pretty near approach may be made. I formerly published a similar (26) medal, that, unless I am greatly deceived, first appeared in some part of the Parthian territories. It presented to our view on one side Jupiter Tar-sen-sis, as he is exhibited by the piece before me, and two words perfectly agreeing with those attending him on this piece, being formed of the very same Phœnician characters. On the other we perceived a human figure sitting in a chair, with an arrow in both its hands, before which stood a bow, a weapon not seldom occurring on the reverses of the Parthian coins (27). Hence it should seem,

(26) *Philos. Transact.* Vol. LI. Tab. xvii. p. 683.

The Parthian kings sometimes wore a sort of long breeches, reaching down to their ankles, similar to what is exhibited by the coin here referred to, as we learn from the reverse of a Parthian medal now in my possession, a draught of which may be seen in (a) Tab. XII. N. 1. This will serve still farther to evince the truth of the point here contended for.

That the coin by me formerly published ought to be ranked among those struck in the Parthian territories, will be rendered still more probable by certain human figures that occur amongst the ruins of Persepolis; which are (b) adorned with a sort of cap, not a little similar to that on the head of the prince presented to our view by this coin. The bow and arrow likewise on it, (c) visible also on a very curious Daric, will confirm what has been here advanced, in support of my present opinion.

(a) *Philos. Transact.* Vol. LVII. Tab. XII. N. 1. p. 266.

(b) Engel. Kæmpfer. *Amœnitat. Exotic. &c.* p. 311. Lemgoviae, 1712.

(c) Hyde Hjſt. Relig. Veter. Persar. &c. p. 113. Oxon. 1760.

that these pieces were struck at Tarsus, when the Parthians (28) were masters of Cilicia. Now I cannot learn from history, that they were ever possessed of that province before the year of the Julian Period 4673, which preceded about forty one years the birth of CHRIST, when (29) it was reduced by Labienus; nor after the following year, when they were overthrown, and expelled the Roman territories (30), by Ventidius. Perhaps

(28) That the piece before me is of Parthian original, seems likewise farther to appear from a complex figure representing a lion tearing (a) a bull, the very type on the reverses of several coins, mentioned in the beginning of this paper, and agreeing in almost all respects with this piece, to be met with in the ruins of (a) Persepolis. For that part of those ruins, at least, are Parthian remains of antiquity, I have (b) formerly observed. But should any one consider them as Persian monuments, and even as prior to the reign of Alexander the Great, yet still the point I would in some measure support by them will thereby be rendered probable, if not incontestable. For the Persians and the Parthians may be looked upon, with sufficient propriety, as one and the same nation; the same habits, the same customs and manners, and the same religion, seeming antiently to have prevailed amongst them.

Whenever therefore we find a lion tearing a. bull, or a stag, on any Greek medals, we may conclude it not improbable, that the prince or people to whom they belonged adopted a type of Parthian, or Persian, extraction.

(c) Gesner assigns the coin I am considering a place amongst those of the Syrian kings, but knows not what to make of it. He only observes, that Morell takes it to be a Parthian medal, and that others entertain a different opinion; not attempting, in any part of his book, to oblige the learned world with an explication of it.

(29) Dio, Lib. xlviii. L. Flor. Lib. IV. c. ix. Plutarch. in *Anton.* Appian. *Alexandrin.* in *Syriac. & Parthic. & de Bell. Civil.* Lib. v.

(30) Dio, ubi sup. Appian. in *Partbie.* Liv. *Epit.* Lib. cxxvii. L. Flor. Lib. IV. c. ix. Plutarch. in *Anton.*

(a) Eng. Kämpf. *Amenitatis Exotic.* p. 339. Lemgoviae, 1712.

(b) *Philol. Translati.* Vol. XLIX. P. i. p. 598, 599, 600.

(c) Gesn. *Tab. Reg. Syr.* IX. N. 2. Tiguri, 1738.

therefore

therefore we may be permitted to suppose our medal to have been emitted from the mint at Tarsus in one of those years. If this should be admitted by the learned, and I can see nothing unreasonable in such a supposition, we may naturally enough account both for the symbol and the inscription. For the Parthians at this time had the Romans in such contempt, by reason of their former victories over them, that a body of their forces advancing to the relief (31) of Labienus, then incamped on Mount Taurus, at no very great distance from them, engaged a Roman army, before their junction with that general. Being therefore overthrown in this battle by Ventidius, (32) who commanded the Romans, and most of them cut in pieces, they received the reward justly due to their temerity and presumption. This certainly gives us reason to believe, that the symbol and inscription I am now upon pointed at the victories gained by the Parthians over the Romans, about the time above mentioned; and that they were intended to perpetuate the memory of those victories, to the remotest periods of time.

In farther support of what has been here advanced, it may not be improper to observe, that a similar (33) medal published by M. Pellerin seems to me to be undoubtedly Parthian. On one side we discover Hercules, with a club in his right hand, and a lion's skin in his left, as he appears on a coin of Tarsus (34), together with a bow, a symbol not

(31) Dio, ubi sup.

(32) Idem ibid.

(33) Peller. ubi sup. Tom. Trois. Pl. CXXII. 11.

(34) Joan. Vaill. ubi sup. p. 157.

seldom visible on the Parthian coins. The reverse agrees with that of the piece I am considering, in every particular but the inscription; from which, tho' Phœnician, that of the medal before me is entirely different. That on M. Pellerin's piece, however, is formed of six letters; the three first of which are apparently *Mem*, *Lamed*, *Caph*, which constitute the word **מלך**, MELEC, KING. The fourth greatly resembles the Chaldee *Vau*, and not a little one of the forms of the same element (35) used by the Palmyrenes. The fifth must be taken, as I apprehend, for *Resch*, being very like the figure of that letter on the medal engaging my attention here. The sixth may pass for a form of *Daleth*, that has suffered from the injuries of time. Admit this, and I see not the least impropriety in such a concession, and the word may be read *OROD*; which, stripped of the Greek termination, is not only a Parthian proper name, but the very name of the prince who sat upon the throne when (36) the Parthians were possessed of Cilicia, and their forces overthrown by Ventidius. Had it not been for the suppression of the latter *Vau*, this word would have been entirely the same with *VOROD*, or *OROD*, exhibited by three Palmyrene (37) inscriptions, and written ΥΟΡΟΔΗΣ, *VORODES*, or *ORODES*, in the correspondent Greek ones. And with regard to the suppression of *Vau*, this was by

(35) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. XLVIII. p. 693. & Tab. XXX.  
Num. 3.

(36) Appian. Alexandrin. & Dio, ubi sup.

(37) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. XLVIII. p. 694, 695.

no means uncommon amongst the Phœnicians, as I have elsewhere (38) incontestably proved.

If the interpretation of this short inscription now laid down should meet with the approbation of the learned, it would bring no small accession of strength to the notion here advanced. It would also evince, in conjunction with what has been offered, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that inscriptions of very different kinds have been handed down to us by this species of coins.

That medals should have been emitted from the mint at Tarsus with Phœnician letters upon them, to those versed in this branch of literature can be no matter of surprize. It has been proved, that such pieces as that now in view were (39) struck by the Phœnicians, some of whom were undoubtedly settled at Tarsus, and consequently ought to be deemed Phœnician, not Punic, coins.

As the medal itself, according to the gentleman who purchased it in the East, seems to have been found either in the neighbourhood of Hems, formerly denominated Emesa (40), or somewhere near Esbele, or Gibele, the Byblus (41) of the antients, and consequently at no very great distance from the borders of Cilicia; my explication of it may possibly, I would flatter myself, prove not altogether unsatisfactory to the learned.

To what has been here advanced some may perhaps object, that we can discover little of the Par-

(38) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. LIV. p. 419.

(39) Peller. ubi sup. Tom. Trois. p. 162, 163.

(40) Poc. *Observat. on Syria*, p. 98.

(41) Id. *ibid.*

thian taste or genius in the coins I have been endeavouring to throw some light upon. They may tell us that such pieces seem much more to resemble the medals of Syria and Phœnicia than the Parthian coins. To which I would only beg leave to reply, that I consider them rather as pieces struck at Tarsus by a Greek or Phœnician artist, in some part of the small space of time that the Parthians were masters of Cilicia, than as proper Parthian coins. This appears to me, I own, extremely probable; but that it was an absolute fact, I must not take upon me to affirm.

Thus have I endeavoured to render it probable, from a surprizing concurrence of circumstances, and a wonderful coincidence of facts, that your Lordship's Phœnician coin was struck at Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, when the Parthians were masters of that country, about forty years before the birth of CHRIST. Whether or no the credibility of such a notion has been here fully evinced, your Lordship, whose profound erudition, as well as singular humanity, is so well known to the whole learned world, with your usual candour and impartiality, will decide. Be this, however, as it will, I shall offer no other apology for any mistakes or omissions that may be discovered in this paper, than that I have been obliged to tread unbeatened paths through the whole course of it; an explication of the medal in question having, as I apprehend, been hitherto unattempted by any considerable writer. I might have expatiated more largely upon the present subject, but am afraid your Lordship will think me already too prolix.

prolix. I shall therefore at this time only beg leave to add, that by honouring me with your future commands, to which the greatest and most ready attention shall ever be paid, you will confer the highest obligation upon,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's very faithful,

and most obedient humble Servant,

Christ-Church, Oxon.  
April 25, 1767.

John Swinton.

ERRATUM, in *Philosop. Transact.* Vol. LIV. Page \* 139.  
note, l. 2. for *ÿw* read *ÿw*, or *Schin, Tzade.*